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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews research studies dealing with the effects on families of changes in the labor force patterns of working mothers during the period from 1970 to 1980. Research information is presented in a column format: the first column provides the study findings, the second points out the sources of the findings, and the third suggests interpretations of results. Findings are organized under the following topic areas: children of working mothers, working mothers of two-parent families, mothers' labor force attachment, working mothers' contributions to family incomes, wives without children, and single parent families. Statistical data related to the topics discussed in the paper are also provided in a tabular form. (MP)

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CHILDREN, WORKING MOTHERS, AND THEIR FAMILIES

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Introduction

Two unforeseen developments of the 1970s interacted to affect the lives of America's children, youth and parents. During the past decade, fewer women bore children, and those who did had only one or two children, on average, instead of the two-to-three children norm of the 1960s. Concurrently, the labor force participation rates of mothers with children under age 18 surged upward. Thus, while the number of children in families dropped from 65.8 million in 1970 to 58.1 million in 1980, the number whose mothers worked or looked for work rose from 25.5 million to nearly 31 million.

During this period, more than a million women per year, on average, joined the labor force; the greatest percentage increase in women's labor force rates was among those with preschool children. The dual-worker family became more common, and the number of women maintaining their own families, often with young children in the home, rose to the highest level ever recorded. These trends emerged in a setting marked by many economic and social changes, including three recessions (1969-70, 1973-75, and 1980), the onset of the highest rates of inflation in several decades, the end of the Vietnam War, delay or postponement of family formation coupled with fewer children and increased incidence of broken marriages.

Against this background, the labor force patterns of people in families changed, and these changes are the subject of this paper.

Findings	Source	Interpretation
Children of Working Mothers		
At the outset of the 1980s, over half of all children had working mothers.	March Current Population Survey (CPS) unless otherwise indicated.	In March 1980, 53% of all children under 18--a total of 30.7 million--had mothers who were either employed or looking for work. Changing marital patterns, relatively high inflation and smaller families have all contribued to increased labor market activity of mothers. By early 1980, more than 17 million mothers of children below age 18 were in the work force, 44% more than in 1970 (see Table 1).

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Findings	Source	Interpretation
Throughout the 1970s, the number of children whose mothers were in the labor force increased, although the total number of children dropped substantially.	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Monthly Vital Statistics Reports; and U.S. Bureau of the Census. Current Population Reports, Series P-20, Fertility of American Women, March CPS.	Between March 1970 and March 1980, the number of children whose mothers were in the labor force increased by more than 5 million, although the total number of children under 18 in the population declined by more than 7 million. During this time, trends in childbearing and fertility changed dramatically. The birth rate hit the lowest level ever recorded before edging up slightly, and an expected family size of two children or less became the norm (see Table 2).
Increased labor market activity among women may be related to lowered birth expectations as women who work outside their homes characteristically have smaller families than women not in the labor force.	U.S. Bureau of the Census. Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 341, Fertility of American Women.	In March 1979, working wives ages 18 to 24 expected, on average, to have about two children while those who were out of the labor force intended, on average, to have more than two. In addition, wives who are in the labor force usually have their children later in life than do wives who are not working outside their homes. In 1979, working wives between ages 18 and 24 had given birth to an average of less than 30% of the youngsters they expected to have during their lifetime, while non-working wives had given birth to more than 50%. Similar patterns existed among older wives.
Throughout the 1970s, the number of children living in two-parent families plummeted, while the number in one-parent families increased steadily.		Between March 1970 and March 1980, the proportion of children living with only one parent increased from 1 of 9 to almost 1 of 5. Overall, the number of children in

Findings

Source

Interpretation

During the 1970s, labor force gains for women were most pronounced among those 25 to 34 years old.

Younger children are less likely than older ones to have mothers in the labor force.

these circumstances rose by nearly 4 million to 11.3 million. This group of children includes those who live with their fathers only as well as those who reside with their mothers only. While only 2% of all children live solely with their father, the number in this situation has grown substantially throughout the decade. At the same time, the number of children living with both their parents dropped by 11.6 million to 46.8 million.

Between 1970 and 1980, women of all ages streamed into the labor force at an unprecedented pace, averaging over 1 million net additions each year except 1970-71, a recessionary period. The greatest gains were posted among women 25 to 34 years old. Many women in this age group, who in other times typically stopped working for marriage or childbearing are no longer doing so. Their labor force participation rate advanced by 21 percentage points, reaching 66% in March 1980. Since nearly 7 of 10 women this age have children, it is hardly surprising that more children than ever before have working mothers.

Among children living with both their parents, the proportion whose mothers were employed or looking for work ranged from 42% for those below age 6, to 54% for ages 6 to 13, and to 59% for those

Findings	Source	Interpretation
		ages 14 to 17. These proportions were significantly greater for children living with their mothers only, but the same order prevailed (see Table 3).
The presence of young children often has an inhibiting effect on a mother's labor force participation.		Some mothers believe that only a parent can provide the loving, caring environments tha a young child needs to be properly nurtured and this may limit their labor force activi Also, child care for youngsters under age 2 may be difficult to locate and is sometimes prohibitively expensive.
Black children living with both their parents are more likely to have a working mother than white children. In March 1980, 62% of all black children in two-parent families compared with 51% of white children had working mothers.		The greater incidence of working mothers among black children living in married-coup families reflects the historically higher labor force participation of black wives. Financial pressures have forced these women to work outside their homes to a much great extent than their white counterparts (see Table 4).
During the 1970s, the gap between the proportions of black and white children in two-parent families with working mothers narrowed substantially.		Until the mid-1970s, the labor force participation for black wives was at least 12 to 14 percentage points higher than that for white wives. At that juncture, as white women began joining the labor force at a faster pace than black women, racial differences between the labor force participation rates of wives narrowed. As a result, the gap between the shares of children in two-parent families whose mothers worked droppe from 17% in 1970 to 11% in 1980.

Findings	Source	Interpretation
Half of all black children live in single-parent families. These youngsters are less likely than white children in comparable families to have a working mother, 55% vs. 67% in March 1980.		Black mothers maintaining families are younger and less educated than their white counterparts. In addition, black families maintained by women are more likely than similar white families to contain preschoolers. Moreover, black families maintained by women are more likely than comparable white families to receive public assistance.
Smaller proportions of Hispanic children than either white or black children have working mothers.		Historically, Hispanic women have had lower levels of labor force participation than either white or black women.
Regardless of race or family type, children whose mothers were in the labor force were in families with considerably higher incomes, on average, than were children with nonworking mothers.		For all two-parent families, median income in 1979 was about $24,400 for families in which the mother was in the labor force and $20,200 for families in which she was not.
White children more frequently live in families with higher average income than do black children.		Although the earnings of white and black wives are equal, the earnings of white husbands far exceed those of black husbands. Among white children in two-parent families, median family income was $24,800 when the mother worked and $20,800 when she did not. Comparable median incomes for black families were $20,800 and $13,500.
A substantial number of children are either wholly or partially dependent on their mothers' earnings for a large share of their financial support.		In March 1980, 1 of every 4 children--14.4 million--lived in families in which the father was either absent (10.3 million), unemployed (2.0 million), or out of the labor force (2.1 million). The number of children

Findings	Source	Interpretation
		in these circumstances jumped by more than 1 million over the year. Reflecting the effects of the slowdown in the nation's economy, about 1/2 of this rise occurred in families in which the father became unemployed. The remaining increase occurred among famil in which the father was absent. More than of 10 black children and 2 of 10 white children were living in one of these situations proportions slightly higher than in previou years.
The earnings that a working mother provides can make a substantial contribution to family income when the father is unemployed, out of the labor force, or absent.		When the mother was in the labor force, med income in 1979 for families with children ranged from $18,400 for those in which the father was unemployed, to $15,600 for those which the father was out of the labor force to $10,100 for those in which the father wa absent. Corresponding medians when the mot was not in the labor force were $12,000, $ 8,400, and $4,600.
The cost of raising a child includes the actual monetary outlays required to supply the child's needs and the opportunity costs of the mother's time devoted to full-time child care.	Reed, R.H., & McIntosh, S. Cost of children. Research Reports (Vol. 2), Commission on Population Growth and the American Future; Espenshade, T.J. Raising a child can now cost $85,000. Intercom, 1980, 8(9).	In 1980, costs of raising a child from birt through college ranged from $58,200 for fam lies whose after-tax income was between $14,000 and $18,000 to $85,200 for those wh disposable income was between $22,500 and $27,500. These estimated costs represent i creases of about 33% from 1977.

Findings

Mothers in Two-Parent Families

During the 1970s, increasing numbers of wives with children under age 18 were in the labor force.

Demographic factors played an important role in the increase in labor force participation among married mothers.

Increasing educational levels of married mothers is an important factor underlying their labor force participation trends.

In March 1980, there were 3.1 million more wives with children under age 18 in the labor force than there had been just 10 years earlier (see Table 5).

Source

Interpretation

In March 1980, more than half (13.4 million) of all working wives had children under 18. Since 1970, the number of married mothers in the labor force has increased about 30% as wives with children entered or reentered the labor force and those already working started having children.

Important demographic factors included later marriage, postponement of childbearing and smaller family size. Now, more so than in the past, some mothers either maintain their labor force participation during their child-rearing years or return to the work force sooner.

The higher the educational level achieved (all other things being equal), the more likely a person is to be in the labor force. In March 1980, the labor force participation rate of married mothers with some college was 60% compared with about 43% for those who did not finish high school. Since 1970, the proportion who have not completed high school--i.e., the group with the lower participation rate--has declined.

This growth in the number of working married mothers--almost all of which was among white women--took place despite the fact that the total population of wives with children

Findings	Source	Interpretation
		declined by about a million over the period. As a result, their labor force participation rate rose steeply from about 40% in 1970 to 54% 10 years later. This increase was caused primarily by the growing likelihood of wives to work rather than to a change in population; only about 2% of the increase can be attributed to the decline in the number of married mothers in the population.
The gap between the labor force participation rates of black and white married mothers decreased over the period.		The labor force participation rate of black married mothers rose from 56% in March 1970 to 65% in March 1980, while the rate for white women went from 38% to 53%. In contrast to the white married mothers, most of the labor force rate increase for blacks was caused by a decline in the number of black married mothers rather than an increase in the number working or looking for work.
Most of the labor force growth of married mothers occurred among those ages 25 to 34.		About 2/3 of the 1970-80 labor force growth of married mothers occurred among women in this age group as their proportion in the labor force grew from 36% to 53%. These mothers were about equally distributed between those whose youngest child was under age 6 and those whose youngest was school age.

Attachment

The labor force participation rate of a particular group of individuals shows what proportion of that group is working or looking for work at a specific point in time. What it does not show is the job attachment of persons in the labor force; some could be preparing to retire, others could be students looking for temporary jobs or working just long enough to get money for some specific purpose. One way of determining how strongly attached a person or group of persons is to market work is to obtain data on the number of weeks these persons worked during an entire calendar year. For the purposes of this paper, such data are called "work experience" data.

Findings	Source	Interpretation
Data on work experience in 1979 show that some married mothers have a strong labor force attachment.		In 1979, 63% of all mothers had worked at some time, up from 51% in 1970. About 58% of the mothers with preschool children worked, compared with 44% 9 years before (see Table 6).
Black married mothers were considerably more likely than their white counterparts to have worked in 1979.		About 70% of black married mothers compare with 52% of their white counterparts worke during the year.
An increasing proportion of mothers of preschool children are working full time, all year.		Between 1970 and 1979, the proportion of working mothers who were employed full tim all year increased from 32% to nearly 37%, as mothers with preschool children became more firmly attached to the labor market. By 1979, 27% of the mothers of preschool children who worked during the year were doing so on a full-time, year-round basis.
Most husbands with working wives work full time, but those with children under age 6 are less likely to work full time, all year than their counterparts with school-age children.		About 80% of the fathers with children unde age 6 worked year round, full time, compare with 84% of those with children ages 6 to The proportions were about the same for fathers whose wives did not work.
Contribution to Family Income		
The earnings of mothers in the labor force are a substantial addition to family income.		The 1979 median income of two-parent famil with both spouses in the labor force in Ma 1980 was about $25,300 compared with $21,1 when just the father was in the labor force (see Table 7). Working mothers earned an average of $5,400 in 1979--$9,000 if they worked year round, full time.

Findings	Source	Interpretation
Median family income is lower when the youngest child is a preschooler than when the youngest is in school.		Income averaged $21,900 in 1979 for families in which the youngest child was not yet in school, compared with $27,900 for families with school-age children. To some extent, this difference is caused by the fact that mothers of preschool children were less likely to work year round, full time than mothers of school-age children. Also, as noted above, fathers of preschoolers were not as likely as fathers of older children to work all year, full time.

Wives without Children

The patterns of labor force participation of married women with children differ in many respects from the patterns of wives with no children. Factors, such as the ages of these wives and the effects of child care responsibilities account for many of the differences.

Wives without children under 18 are, on average, older than those with children.	About 80% of the wives without children were 35 years old or over (including more than 50% who were over age 55), compared with less than half the married mothers. Thus, a large proportion of wives without children are at ages where labor force participation is declining. As a result, 54% of married mothers were working or looking for work, compared with 46% of the wives without children (see Table 8).
Age for age, young wives without children were more likely than those with children to be in the labor force.	About 78% of the 16- to 24-year-old wives without children and 84% of those ages 25 to 34 were in the labor force, compared with 43% and 53% of the mothers in those age groups.

Findings	Source	Interpretation
The effect of child care responsibilities is also reflected in differences in unemployment.		Married mothers are considerably more likely than wives without children to be unemployed. In March 1980, the unemployment rate for wives with children was 5.7% while that for wives without children was 4.5%. Also, mothers of very young children were more likely than mothers of teenagers to be unemployed: the unemployment rate of mothers whose youngest child was under age 3 was 8.8% while the rate for those whose youngest was ages 14 to 17 was only 3.2%.
Other differences in the labor force participation of these two groups of wives reflect economic necessity.		Among wives with less than 12 years of schooling completed, the labor force participation rate was higher for mothers (43%) than for those without children (27%). This may be partly because wives with relatively little formal schooling are likely to have husbands with similar education, and hence, lower earnings. Also, where the husband's income level was low (under $10,000), wives with children were far more likely to work than those without children under 18, reflecting the financial burden of children.
Single-Parent Families		
Since 1970, the number of one-parent families has increased substantially.		In March 1980, 1 of every 5 families with children under 18 was maintained by a single parent--who was either divorced, separated, widowed or has never married--compared with 1 of 9 in 1970. The accelerated growth in the number of one-parent families between 197[illegible] and 1980 (an increase of nearly 3 million)

Findings	Source	Interpretation
		was far greater than that registered during the preceding two decades (see Table 9). These 6.2 million single-parent families are of special concern because 2 of every 5 have incomes below the poverty level, compared with 1 of every 17 two-parent families.
One-parent families are maintained largely by mothers; the 10% that are maintained by fathers rarely face the economic difficulties encountered by families with a mother only.		The proportion of families maintained by a mother only that was below the poverty level was more than double that of families maintained by a father only (40% and 16%, respectively.
The most prominent reasons for the increase in single-parent families during the 1970s was the rising incidence of marital breakup and the increasing number of children born to never-married mothers.	Monthly Vital Statistics, Vol. 23, No. 11, PHS-75-1120, and Vol. 27, No. 13, PHS-79-1120. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare; Monthly Vital Statistics, Vol. 26, No. 5, PHS-79-1120.	Since 1970, the divorce rate has grown from 3.5 per thousand population to 5.3 thousand. Also, the number of births outside marriage has grown; by 1975, 14% of all babies were born to unmarried women compared with 4% in 1950. In part, this reflected increased childbearing among teenagers. In 1950, women under age 20 bore 12% of all children, but by 1975, the proportion was 19%.
A relatively high proportion of mothers maintaining families has not completed high school and only a few have completed college.		In March 1980, 35% of these mothers had not completed high school and just 7% had 4 years of college or more. In contrast, 21% of married mothers had not completed high school while 14% were college graduates.
Accompanying the large increase in the number of mothers heading their own families have been large gains in the numbers who are working.		In March 1980, the labor force participation rate of mothers maintaining their own families was 67%, up from 59% 10 years earlier (see Table 10).

Findings	Source	Interpretation
Unemployment was more prevalent among single-parent mothers than among married mothers.		At 10.7%, the unemployment rate of mothers maintaining their own families was considerably higher than that of married mothers (5.7%).
As with married mothers, the labor force rates of mothers maintaining their own families vary by age of the youngest child.		About 55% of these mothers with children under age 6 were working or looking for work, compared with about 74% of those with children ages 6 to 17.
Single-parent families have lower incomes, on average, than two-parent families. However, the income of single-parent families maintained by the father more nearly approaches the two-parent average than does the income of families maintained by the mother.		In 1979, the median income of families maintained by a mother was $10,600 compared with $15,300 for families maintained by a father. Average income of two-parent families in 1979 was $22,900.
Several factors contribute to the income differences. These include: fewer earners in single-parent families, higher proportions of preschool children, and fewer years of school completed by single parents.		Only 20% of the families maintained by the mother had two or more earners in 1979, as did 26% of the families maintained by fathers. In comparison, 69% of two-parent families were multiearner families. In addition, families maintained by mothers were more likely to have preschool children whose presence often inhibits the mother's labor force activity.

Table . Families with children under 18 years by age, type of family, and employment st f parents, March 1980

(Numbers in thousands)

Item	Families with children under 18 years			
	Total	Under 6 years	6 to 13 years, none younger	14 to 17 years, none younger
Total families with children	30,811	13,260	11,772	5,778
Mother in labor force	17,107	6,105	7,476	3,526
Employed	15,961	5,544	7,031	3,385
Unemployed	1,147	560	444	142
Mother not in labor force	13,076	7,002	4,058	2,016
Married-couple families	24,580	11,092	9,130	4,358
Mother in labor force	13,352	5,008	5,695	2,650
Employed	12,606	4,623	5,418	2,564
Unemployed	747	384	276	86
Mother not in labor force	11,227	6,084	3,435	1,708
Father in labor force	23,016	10,488	8,559	3,969
Mother in labor force	12,661	4,769	5,403	2,489
Employed	11,968	4,406	5,150	2,412
Unemployed	693	363	253	77
Mother not in labor force	10,355	5,718	3,157	1,480
Father employed	22,026	9,918	8,245	3,863
Mother in labor force	12,149	4,534	5,192	2,423
Employed	11,534	4,220	4,962	2,352
Unemployed	614	314	230	71
Mother not in labor force	9,877	5,384	3,053	1,440
Father unemployed	990	569	314	106
Mother in labor force	513	235	211	66
Employed	434	186	188	60
Unemployed	79	49	23	7
Mother not in labor force	477	334	103	40

Father not in the labor force	1,051	295	403	353
Mother in labor force	443	108	198	137
Employed	408	100	179	128
Unemployed	35	8	19	8
Mother not in labor force	608	187	205	216
Father in Armed Forces	513	310	167	36
Mother in labor force	248	131	94	23
Employed	230	117	89	23
Unemployed	19	14	5	—
Mother not in labor force	264	179	73	12
Other families with children[1/]				
Maintained by women	5,604	2,015	2,405	1,185
Mother in labor force	3,755	1,097	1,781	876
Employed	3,355	921	1,613	821
Unemployed	400	176	168	56
Mother not in labor force	1,849	918	623	308
Maintained by men	627	153	238	236

1/ Includes only those families maintained by divorced, separated, widowed or never-married parents.

NOTE: Due to rounding, sums of individual items may not equal totals.

Table 2. Number of own children under 18 years old by age, type of family, and labor force status of mother, March 1970 and March 1980

(Numbers in thousands)

Item	Total children under 18		Children 6 to 17		Children under 6	
	March 1970	March 1980r	March 1970	March 1980r	March 1970	March 1980r
Total children 1/	65,755	58,107	46,149	40,688	19,606	17,418
Mother in labor force	25,544	30,663	19,954	23,196	5,590	7,467
Mother not in labor force	39,550	26,493	25,627	16,722	13,923	9,771
Husband-wife families	58,399	46,829	40,479	32,150	17,920	14,679
Mother in labor force	21,982	24,218	17,035	18,032	4,947	6,186
Mother not in labor force	36,417	22,611	23,444	14,118	12,973	8,493
Families maintained by women 2/	6,695	10,327	5,102	7,768	1,593	2,559
Mother in labor force	3,562	6,445	2,919	5,164	643	1,281
Mother not in labor force	3,133	3,882	2,183	2,604	950	1,278
Families maintained by men 2/	661	951	568	771	93	180

1/ Children are defined as "own" children of the family. Included are never married sons, daughters, step children, and adopted children. Excluded are other related children such as grandchildren, nieces, nephews, cousins, and unrelated children.

2/ Includes only divorced, separated, widowed, or never-married persons.

r= revised

NOTE: Due to rounding, sums of individual items may not equal totals.

Table 3. Children under 18 years by age, type of family, and employment status of pare
March 1980

(Numbers in thousands)

Item	Children under 18 years			
	Total	Under 6 years	6 to 13 years	14 to 17 years
Total children	58,107	17,418	25,966	14,723
Mother in labor force	30,663	7,467	14,457	8,738
Employed	28,419	6,694	13,424	8,300
Unemployed	2,244	774	1,033	438
Mother not in labor force	26,493	9,771	11,128	5,594
Married-couple families	46,829	14,679	20,671	11,479
Mother in labor force	24,218	6,186	11,241	6,791
Employed	22,779	5,667	10,593	6,520
Unemployed	1,438	519	648	271
Mother not in labor force	22,611	8,493	9,430	4,688
Father in labor force	43,874	13,875	19,402	10,597
Mother in labor force	22,990	5,896	10,692	6,402
Employed	21,655	5,407	10,094	6,154
Unemployed	1,335	489	597	248
Mother not in labor force	20,884	7,978	8,711	4,195
Father employed	41,843	13,069	18,531	10,242
Mother in labor force	21,996	5,595	10,312	6,089
Employed	20,818	5,174	9,685	5,959
Unemployed	1,178	421	627	230
Mother not in labor force	19,847	7,474	8,220	4,053
Father unemployed	2,031	805	871	355
Mother in labor force	994	301	480	213
Employed	837	233	409	195
Unemployed	156	68	71	18
Mother not in labor force	1,037	504	391	142
Father not in the labor force	2,051	406	881	764
Mother in labor force	804	131	353	320
Employed	730	119	314	298
Unemployed	74	12	40	23
Mother not in labor force	1,247	275	528	444

Father in Armed Forces----------	904	398	388	118
Mother in labor force--------	424	159	196	68
Employed----------	394	141	185	68
Unemployed----------	30	18	11	1
Mother not in labor force-----	480	239	192	49
Other families[1/]				
Maintained by women----------	10,327	2,559	4,915	2,853
Mother in labor force------	6,445	1,281	3,216	1,948
Employed----------	5,639	1,027	2,831	1,781
Unemployed----------	806	254	385	167
Mother not in labor force--	3,882	1,278	1,698	906
Maintained by men----------	951	180	380	391

1/ Includes only those children in families maintained by divorced, separated, widowed or never-married parents.

NOTE: Due to rounding, sums of individual items may not equal totals.

Table 4. Children under 18 years by age, type of family, labor force status of mother, and race and Hispanic origin, March 1980, and median family income, 1979

	Two-parent families			One-parent families maintained by women[1/]		
	White	Black	Hispanic	White	Black	Hispanic
	Numbers (in thousands)					
Children under age 18	41,915	3,864	3,657	6,376	3,792	947
Mother in labor force	21,235	2,395	1,611	4,275	2,090	453
Mother not in labor force	20,680	1,470	2,046	2,100	1,702	494
Children under age 6	13,148	1,182	1,334	1,482	1,028	313
Mother in labor force	5,344	681	504	786	478	113
Mother not in labor force	7,804	501	830	697	550	200
Children age 6 to 13	18,452	1,741	1,593	3,081	1,768	441
Mother in labor force	9,808	1,150	744	2,123	1,054	239
Mother not in labor force	8,644	591	850	953	714	203
Children age 14 to 17	10,315	942	730	1,813	996	193
Mother in labor force	6,083	564	363	1,362	559	101
Mother not in labor force	4,232	377	366	451	438	92
	Median family income, 1979					
Children under age 18	$22,900	$17,800	$16,600	$ 8,400	$ 6,200	$ 5,500
Mother in labor force	24,800	20,800	20,100	11,200	8,200	8,200
Mother not in labor force	20,800	13,500	13,400	4,600	4,700	4,700
Children under age 6	19,800	16,400	14,200	5,200	4,500	4,500
Mother in labor force	21,200	19,800	17,500	8,300	6,300	6,400
Mother not in labor force	18,700	13,100	11,800	3,800	3,500	4,200
Children age 6 to 13	23,300	18,500	17,200	8,300	6,500	6,000
Mother in labor force	24,900	21,200	20,100	10,700	8,300	8,500
Mother not in labor force	21,400	13,600	14,000	4,900	4,800	5,200
Children age 14 to 17	27,300	18,000	20,600	12,100	7,800	6,800
Mother in labor force	29,000	21,100	24,100	13,900	9,500	10,200
Mother not in labor force	24,300	14,000	16,600	6,200	5,900	5,300

1/ Includes only divorced, separated, widowed, or never married parents.

NOTE: Due to rounding sums of individual items may not equal totals.

Table 5. Labor force status of mothers in two-parent families, by age of youngest child and race, March 1979 and March 1980

Age of youngest child and race	Labor force (in thousands)		Participation rate	
	1979	1980[1]	1979	1980[1]
Total with own children under 18 years[2]	10,392	13,447	39.9	54.2
White	9,028	11,874	38.4	53.2
Black	1,154	1,227	55.7	65.3
Own children 6 to 17 years only, total	6,366	8,381	49.3	61.8
White	5,744	7,529	48.1	61.2
Black	551	667	64.5	68.4
Own children under 6 years, total	3,938	5,067	30.5	45.9
White	3,284	4,345	28.5	43.3
Black	603	560	49.5	61.9
Own children 3 to 5 years, none younger	1,948	2,161	37.3	51.4
White	1,626	1,852	34.9	49.5
Black	304	246	59.6	72.2
Own children under 3 years	1,988	2,906	25.9	41.1
White	1,658	2,493	24.1	39.7
Black	299	314	42.2	55.7

1/ Data have been revised and may differ from that previously published.

2/ Children are defined as "own" children of 2-parent families. Included are never-married sons, daughters, stepchildren and adopted children. Excluded are other related children such as grandchildren, nieces, nephews, cousins and unrelated children.

NOTE: Because of rounding, sums of individual items may not equal totals.

Table 6 Work experience in 1970 and 1979 of mothers in two-parent families by age of child

(Numbers in thousands)

Weeks worked	Total with own children under 18 years[1]		6 to 17 years only		Under 6 years	
	1970	1979[2]	1970	1979[2]	1970	1979[2]
Civilian noninstitutional population, total	25,829	24,829	12,925	13,561	12,904	11,269
Worked during year	13,242	15,624	7,461	9,115	5,722	6,509
Percent of population	51.3	62.9	57.7	67.2	44.3	57.8
Worked (percent)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Full time,[3] total	62.9	62.9	62.9	63.2	62.8	62.6
50 to 52 weeks	32.0	36.6	39.5	43.2	21.6	27.4
1 to 49 weeks	30.9	26.3	23.4	20.0	41.2	35.1
Part time[4]	37.1	37.1	37.1	36.8	37.4	37.4
Did not work during year (number)	12,587	9,205	5,464	4,445	7,182	4,760

1/ See footnote 2, Table .
2/ Data have been revised and may differ from that previously published.
3/ Usually worked 35 hours or more in a majority of weeks worked.
4/ Usually worked 1 to 34 hours in a majority of weeks worked
NOTE: Because of rounding, sums of individual items may not equal totals.

Table 7. Median income of two-parent families in 1970 and 1979 by labor force status of parents in March 1971 and 1980

Item	Husband in labor force			Husband not in labor force		
	Total	Wife in labor force	Wife not in labor force	Total	Wife in labor force	Wife not in labor force
1970 (in 1979 dollars)						
Total with own children 1/	$21,500	$23,500	$20,100	$11,700	$15,900	$ 9,100
6 to 17 years old, none younger	24,200	25,400	22,900	13,100	16,900	10,000
Under 6 years	18,600	20,100	18,200	9,300	12,900	8,100
1979						
Total with own children	$23,400	$25,300	$21,100	$12,100	$16,200	$ 9,100
6 to 17 years old, none younger	26,600	27,900	24,000	13,000	17,000	9,800
Under 6 years	20,400	21,900	19,100	9,300	13,900	6,900

1/ See footnote 2, Table

NOTE: Because of rounding, sums of individual items may not equal totals.

able 8. Selected characteristics of wives, by presence of own children under 18 years, March 1980

Selected characteristics	With own children under 18			With no own children under 18		
	In labor force	Participation rate	Not in labor force	In labor force	Participation rate	Not in labor force
Total:						
Number (in thousands)	13,447	54.2	11,382	11,019	46.1	12,902
Percent	100.0	--	100.0	100.0	--	100.0
Age of wife:						
16 to 24 years	8.9	43.0	14.0	15.8	77.5	4.0
25 to 34 years	39.2	53.3	40.5	18.4	83.6	3.1
35 years and over	51.9	57.4	45.5	65.8	37.7	92.9
Years of school completed:						
Less than 12 years	16.4	42.6	26.0	18.6	27.0	42.9
12 years only	49.6	55.3	47.4	47.8	51.2	38.9
13 to 15 years	17.7	58.6	14.8	16.2	56.6	10.6
16 years or more	16.4	62.1	11.8	17.4	66.4	7.5
Husband's income:						
Less than $5,000	6.2	51.8	6.8	10.3	29.9	20.6
$5,000 to 9,999	12.6	53.4	13.0	17.7	35.6	27.2
$10,000 to 14,999	21.5	59.0	17.6	22.4	54.0	16.3
$15,000 to 19,999	22.8	58.8	18.9	19.6	60.6	10.9
$20,000 to 24,999	17.1	54.2	17.0	13.9	56.7	9.1
$25,000 and over	19.9	46.8	26.7	16.0	46.3	15.9

Table 9. Families with own children under 18 years old, by type of family, selected years 1950-80

(Numbers in thousands)

Year	All families with own children[1]	Married-couple families[2]	Single-parent families[3]			
			Total	Single-parent families as percentage of all families with children	Maintained by men[3]	Maintained by women
1950	19,847	18,316	1,531	7.7	257	1,256
1960	25,662	23,333	2,329	9.1	232	2,097
1970	28,669	25,412	3,257	11.4	333	2,924
1971	28,796	25,096	3,700	12.8	332	3,368
1972	29,461	25,492	3,969	13.5	388	3,581
1973	29,575	25,396	4,180	14.1	385	3,795
1974	29,703	25,289	4,414	15.0	394	4,020
1975	30,060	25,236	4,824	16.0	424	4,400
1976	30,177	25,110	5,067	16.8	446	4,621
1977	30,145	24,875	5,270	17.5	486	4,784
1978	30,369	24,625	5,745	18.9	539	5,206
1979	30,371	24,514	5,857	19.3	569	5,288
1980	30,811	24,580	6,231	20.2	627	5,604

[1]Children are defined as "own" children of single-parent families. Included are never married sons, daughters, stepchildren, and adopted children. Excluded are other related children, such as grandchildren, nieces, nephews, cousins, and unrelated children.
[2]Includes men in Armed Forces living off post or with their families on post.
[3]Includes divorced, separated, widowed, or never married parents.

Table 10. Labor force status of single parents, by sex and age of own children under 18 years old, March 1970, 1975 and March 1980

(Numbers in thousands)

Labor force status	March 1970			March 1975			March 1980			Median income of families with own children under 18 years in 1979[1] (dollars)
	With own children under 18 years, total[1]	Children 6 to 17 years	Children under 6 years	With own children under 18 years, total[1]	Children 6 to 17 years	Children under 6 years	With own children under 18 years, total[1]	Children 6 to 17 years	Children under 6 years	
Total single-parent families[2]-----	3,257	2,075	1,182	4,824	2,988	1,836	6,231	4,063	2,168	$ 8,693
Families maintained by women-------	2,924	1,813	1,111	4,400	2,640	1,760	5,604	3,589	2,015	8,077
Mother in civilian labor force---	1,726	1,215	521	2,635	1,749	885	3,755	2,658	1,097	10,582
Labor force participation rate (percent)----------	59.4	67.0	46.9	59.9	66.3	50.3	67.0	74.1	54.4	--
Employed----------	1,611	1,143	468	2,305	1,572	733	3,355	2,434	921	11,138
Unemployed----------	125	72	53	329	177	152	400	224	176	5,297
Unemployment rate (percent)	7.2	5.9	10.2	12.5	10.1	8.6	10.7	8.4	16.0	--
Mother not in labor force-------	1,188	598	590	1,765	891	874	1,849	932	918	4,376
Families maintained by men--------	333	262	71	424	348	76	627	474	153	15,332
Father in civilian labor force--	304	237	67	365	294	70	546	417	129	16,683
Labor force participation rate (percent)----------	91.3	90.6	(3)	86.1	84.5	92.1	87.1	88.0	84.3	
Employed----------	297	230	67	322	262	60	499	389	110	16,
Unemployed----------	7	7	--	42	32	10	47	28	19	(3)
Unemployment rate (percent)	2.3	3.0	--	11.5	10.9	(3)	8.6	6.7	14.7	--
Father in Armed Forces----------	NA	NA	NA	4	3	1	12	3	10	(3)
Father not in labor force-------	29	25	4	55	51	4	69	54	15	(3)

[1]Children are defined as "own" children of single-parent families. Included are never married sons, daughters, stepchildren, and adopted children. Included are other related children, such as grandchildren, nieces, nephews, cousins, and unrelated children.

[2]Includes divorced, separate, widowed, or never married parents.

[3]Rate or median not shown where base is less than 75,000.
NA = not available.